

When Newark
Was Younger

Jersey Railroads



New Jersey Historical Society lithograph of 1847 shows New Jersey Railroad Bridge at Center street with "Newark Bridge" to north around 1804.

It was no accident that caused Newark to become an important manufacturing center," according to the Official Master Plan of the City of Newark. "Rather, it was a combination of favorable factors, chief among which were its unsurpassed railroads, its seaport and its airport. No other city in the country possesses such an excellent and integrated transportation system."

The very clear map of rail facilities accompanying this report of Newark's Central Planning Board should be in the hands of every student of commercial geography in our schools, for it shows distinctly the five important railroads serving Newark with their 12 stations and 20 freight yards. At the peak of war activity in 1944 these railroads handled over 14,000,000 tons of inbound and outbound freight.

Newark has had the advantage of transportation by rail for well over 100 years, for the New Jersey Railroad and Transportation Company, chartered in March, 1832, began its first regular trips September 15, 1834, between Jersey City and Newark. Gordon's Gazetteer, published in 1833 and still a valuable source of information on Jersey geography, describes the railroad then in process of construction. "The directors



A Camden and Amboy R. R. master mechanic created the "cow-catcher" to keep engines on tracks and number of wheels, originally four, was increased to six to give locomotives greater stability. Despite these improvements, they often jumped the tracks like the "Summit," a Lockawanna "flyer," at Orange in 1891.

have not only run the railroad through part of the town, but have opened a splendid avenue of 120 feet wide by its side (the present New Jersey Railroad avenue) and propose to cross the Passaic River about the center of the town upon a wooden bridge on stone abutments, which will give an additional trait of beauty to the place."

The bridge was at Center

street, and the tracks continued south from there down what is now River street to Market street plaza with a stop at Dickerson's Hotel at the foot of Market street. The original Market Street Station was built about 1838, and property values in the neighborhood immediately began to rise, many new streets being opened. Although the main line continued down

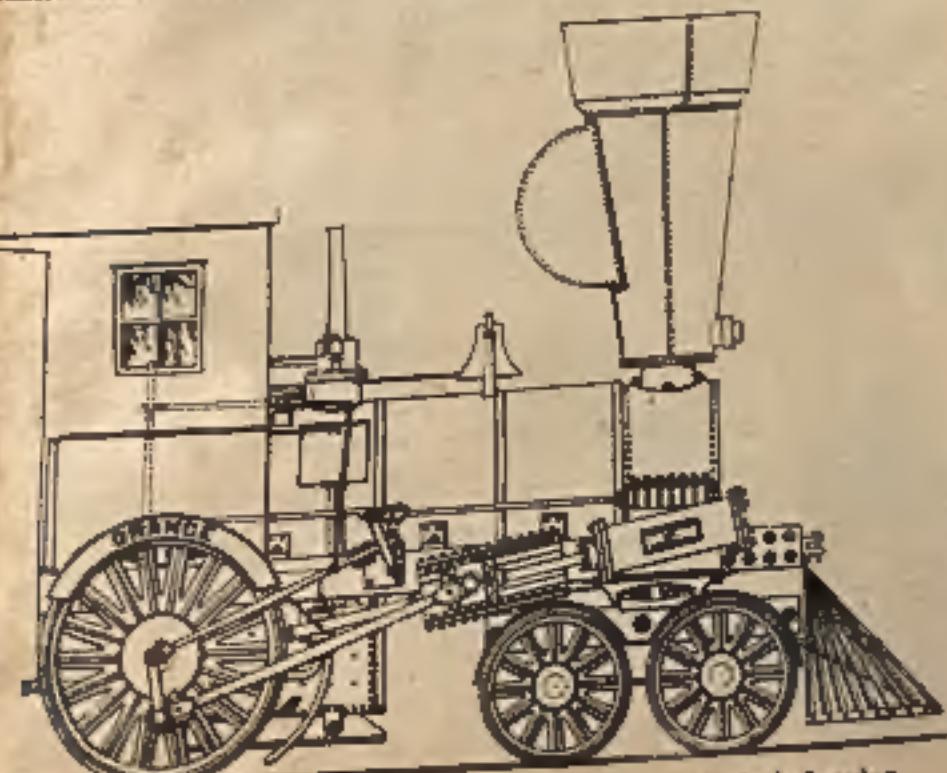
New Jersey Railroad avenue, a branch ran up Market street and south on Broad street, stopping at Chandler's Hotel opposite Mechanic street, now Edison place, and terminating at Thomas street. By December, 1835, the line was built to Elizabethtown, and a month later it was at Rahway, reaching its terminus at East Brunswick on the Raritan in July, 1836.

THE crossing of the marshes between the Passaic and the Hackensack presented a serious problem as it did in the building of the turnpike in 1794, and for over a year after the line reached Newark the cars were pulled by horses. By December, 1835, the embankments on which the trucks were laid had settled enough to hold greater weights and the first engine passed over the road from Jersey City to Newark. The cars drawn by the first engine, named the "Newark," were rounded like a stagecoach, with three compartments, and seats on the top.

Newark was not the first town in New Jersey to have a railroad, for the New Jersey Railroad was the third to be built in the state. The Camden and Amboy having been opened in November, 1832, and the Paterson and Hudson River Railroad in June, 1832. The latter railroad shared with the New Jersey Railroad the heavy expense of cutting the tunnel through Bergen Hill, used by both lines. This was not completed until 1838, and until that time the cars were drawn over the hill by horse power. Passengers could change for Paterson at a station known later as Marion.

To connect Morristown

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Drawing of the "Orange" built for Morris & Essex by Seth Boyden in his factory which was located at corner of Orange and Broad streets. This and the "Essex" were first engines used by M. & E.



Lockawanna Broad street crossing with station in background. Dell engine on spur at right served meat packing houses nearby. Building behind it is old Continental Hotel, now the Berwick.

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In 1892 Millburn (misspelled in sign) commuters used this station of the Lackawanna. The railroad passed through here as early as 1836 when the community, known as Millville, had only a blacksmith shop, a store, a tavern, a paper mill and a few dwellings. The growth of the town started with the coming of the railroad.

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with the New Jersey Railroad at Newark, a group of business men in the two towns organized the Morris and Essex Railroad, now part of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western. When the line was constructed to Orange in November, 1834, the service began with horse-drawn cars. By 1838 the line reached its terminal in Morristown, where passengers changed to stages for points in the interior.

Little freight was carried by this line at first, the Morris Canal being used as a freight artery for North Jersey. The line soon acquired two locomotives, the Orange and Essex, which, it is said, stopped anywhere for travelers or to drive cows from the track. The Morris and Essex Railroad did not cross the Passaic River, but the engines were exchanged at Division street for horses which pulled the cars down Broad street to Center street where they were attached to the eastbound trains of the New Jersey Railroad. Frank J. Urquhart in his history of Newark describes a map of 1838, which shows a spur of the New Jersey Railroad extending from Center street out to the Common, now Military Park, and down Broad street as far as Thomas street, indicating that shop owners on Broad street could

NEWARK AND THE RAILROADS

have freight delivered right to their doors.

HERE were few double tracks in the state until Civil War days, turnouts being provided at intervals for passing. The rails were narrow strips of metal which easily became loosened from the ties, and sometimes flew up, projecting through the floors of the cars, endangering the lives of the passengers. For the first few years the cars of the New Jersey Railroad were lighted with sperm candles, for no one had developed a gas lamp which would not be blown out by the motion of the cars. A contemporary describes the motion of the first cars of the Morris and Essex as somewhat like that of a rocking chair on a log pile. No luxurious plush-covered seats filled these early cars; passengers faced each other on rough board benches.

The years between 1840 and 1860 were a period of great increases in population in Essex County. So many homes were built after 1848 along Bolling Springs lane, west of the Morris Canal, that a station was built on the Morris and Essex Railroad, named Rowe's Ville, for a

large farm owner in that section of Newark. By 1855 popular usage had changed the name to Roseville. Later that year the Newark and Bloomfield Railroad was built, running its first trip, an excursion to East Bloomfield, December 18, 1855, and opening regular service the next day. This line, eventually carried to West Bloomfield and Montclair, was leased by the Morris and Essex and became to all intents and purposes a part of that railroad.

The Morris and Essex Railroad had been extended to Dover in 1848 and plans made to push it through to Phillipsburg, which was reached in 1860. Meanwhile the New Jersey Railroad had built a branch road from East Newark to the bank of the Passaic opposite Division street. A draw-bridge erected there in 1855 made possible a direct connection with the Morris and Essex and eliminated the awkward trip down Broad street. The present route from Newark to Hoboken was not completed until 1862, and in 1868 the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company leased the entire road from Hoboken to Phillipsburg, and the

first station of the Lackawanna in Jefferson Village, now Maplewood. When the Morris & Essex was extended through its section in 1838, the Newark City Directory reported on the railroad's safety, assuring the public that the engineers were all "sober, cold-water men" and that accidents seldom happened

line in the summer for excursions and day trips with "trains run at 10th hours as to give passengers a long day at Delafield or among the numerous hills surrounding it." The Passaic, Newark and New York Railroad, which was opened in 1868, now the Newark branch of the Erie, was added to that road at about the same period. (Harper's "New York and Erie Railroad Guide," published in 1882, states, "It cannot be denied that the Erie Railroad is one of the greatest achievements of modern intellect.")

THE history of New Jersey Railroad is a complicated political tangle, due to the powerful monopoly granted by the state to the Camden and Amboy Railroad. The final consolidation of the two roads was completed in 1867, under the name of the United Railroad and Canal Companies of New Jersey, the Canal Company being the Delaware and Raritan Canal, controlled for many years by the Camden and Amboy. In 1871 the United Companies leased their lines to the Pennsylvania Railroad for 99 years, a period which has an air of finality.

The Greenwood Lake Railroad whose stations in North Newark and Forest Hill now serve commuters was built as the Montclair Railway and sold to the Erie Railroad at a foreclosure sale. Originally running to Greenwood Lake Village, it was described in Shaw's History of Essex County in 1884 as "A popular

While the Central Railroad of New Jersey originated in the Elizabethtown and Somerville Railroad, chartered in 1831, it did not come to Newark until 1844, when the line succeeded in overcoming the bitter opposition that developed to a bridge authorized by the State Legislature across Newark Bay.

The Jersey Central recently celebrated its 100th anniversary, distributing a pamphlet of historical highlights compiled from parts of a full-length history of the road by Joseph O. Osgood Jr., which is in preparation.

The Central Railroad of New Jersey and the Lehigh Valley road, which hauls great quantities of freight, bring the number of great railroad systems serving Newark to five.



In 1894 this six-wheeler served the Sussex Railroad which was opened in 1854 to develop the iron mines. It eventually became part of Lackawanna system. At right: The Newark & Bloomfield Railroad, a com-

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muters' line from the start, branched off from Morris & Essex main line at Rossville as it does today except that tracks were then of grade. Crossing was eliminated with depression of line's roadbed in 1903.

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